THIRD SERIES.—No. 6.

THE

TRAVELLER'S STORY;

OR THE

VILLAGE BAR-ROOM.

NEW YORK:
KIGGINS & KELLOGG,
123 & 125 William St.

Ex Libris
ELVAH KARSHNER

CHILDREN'S BOOK
COLLECTION

LIBRARY OF THE
UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA
LOS ANGELES

THE

TRAVELLER'S STORY;

OR THE

VILLAGE BAR-ROOM.

NEW YORK:
KIGGINS & KELLOGG,
88 JOHN STREET.

The Traveller's Return.

THE

VILLAGE BAR-ROOM

Twenty years from the time I first set out from home, I found myself one dreary evening in November, winding down the road by the old mill at the head of the valley in which I was born. The scene was cheerless. Twenty years are a great while in a man's life, and sad changes often take place in less time. To me it seemed an age. I tried to recall the features and voices of my friends as I had last seen and heard them, while fancy mocked me by suggesting the changes that had fallen upon all I loved.

Some strange whim led me around by the grave-yard. The church looked like the face of an old friend, but the lattice

on one side of the belfry was broken away, and a loose shutter swung back and forth in the bleak wind which made sad music amid the tall elms and wide spreading willows. The changes in the grave-yard were sad enough too. Death had been at work in that quiet valley, and many new tomb-stones were there. On some, over which the moss and wild vines were creeping, I traced names that were as familiar to me as my own.

I sat down in the angle formed by the vestry behind the church and yielded to my sad forebodings. How many of these new tenants of the grave were bone of my bone? Perhaps my father! Perhaps (and the thought was indeed bitter), perhaps my mother! And then I remembered the sad voice, the tender embrace, the last look of our parting twenty years ago. Every night in those long years had I laid my head on my pillow with the remembrance of my mother's blessing resting like the dew of heaven upon my heart. And often amid scenes of temptation and peril, had her warning voice whispered within me, "My son, do

not this great wickedness and sin against God." I longed, yet dreaded, to look again upon the circle of beloved ones, for I could scarcely hope that it was yet unbroken.

While I was indulging these sad thoughts, I heard the gate creak on its hinges, and withdrawing myself still further into the deepening shadows, I witnessed a scene I can never forget. An old man, with feeble, tottering steps which he vainly endeavored to steady with his oaken staff, crept slowly up the path toward the church. His thin white locks and pale face were in sad keeping with his threadbare clothes.

As he approached, I could observe the strange expression of his countenance, which now seemed lighted with painful and most vivid emotions, now sunk into hopeless imbecility. He passed so near me that I could have touched him, and tottering toward a cluster of graves, he dropped upon a tombstone to rest his trembling limbs, leaned upon his staff, and rocking himself to and fro, wailed in low muttering tones his dirge for the

Scene in the Church-yard

dead. For a while his thoughts seemed incoherent and rambling. By degrees they became more distinct, and at last, with startling earnestness, and in a voice, the recollection of which even now thrills me with horror, he thus broke forth: 'Yes, ye are all gone! All! there is not one left of all I so truly loved. And I sent ye here. The husband and the father, who should have been your guide and stay, was your bitterest foe. But ye are quiet now. Ye may have rest here; while I can never know peace or happiness again. The bitter tears I shed are a fit reward for my deeds. Oh, if the grave could give up its dead, before I lie down beside you, I would tell you of the depth and bitterness of my repentance. Well are ye avenged. The worm that dieth not, already preys upon my vitals. The fire that is not quenched is already kindled in my bosom. Death can bring me no relief. The mountains can not hide me from the wrath of an offended God." Then throwing his arms wildly upward, with a feeble shriek, he fell prostrate on the ground.

I hastened to him, and raising him in my arms, chafed his cold hands and strove to restore consciousness. He sighed heavily, and slowly withdrawing himself from me, sat down on the newly-made grave, and burst into tears.

Long and bitterly he wept. I did not strive to comfort him, for I well knew that there is no balm so soothing to the bruised and broken spirit as the tear of repentance. I stood beside him until his emotion subsided, and then spoke to him of hope and comfort. "Young man," said he in stern and bitter tones, "talk not to me of comfort. Bid the grave give up its dead—recall the deeds of a long life, and then bid me hope for peace. No," said he, sorrowfully, shaking his head, "it is all over now. They can never come to me—and how can I go to them! Would I were even now sleeping beside them."

While he thus unconsciously uttered his thoughts aloud, I looked for the names upon the grave-stones. They were those of old friends, and the wretched being who sat trembling before me,

was my father's friend and nearest neighbor.

Here, indeed, was a sad wreck. I spoke to the old man of his lost children, and he wept as he dwelt with doating fondness on their memory.

With much entreaty I prevailed on him to leave the place, and suffer me to lead him home. Home, alas! he had none. The alms-house was his only refuge, and having conducted him thither, I sought my father's house. It was a joyful meeting. I was like one restored from the dead, and although I missed some bright, happy faces from among the group that welcomed me, yet the tears I shed for them were mingled with gratitude to the good Shepherd, who had gathered the lambs of the flock to his bosom in their years of innocence and purity.

When all inquiries were satisfied, and our thoughts turned from ourselves to our friends and neighbors, I learned the history of the old man I had seen in the graveyard. When I left home, he was an industrious, thriving farmer, with a

The Villager's Family.

wife and three fine children, the oldest a son of eighteen, the second a daughter of fifteen, and a little boy of seven years. His wife was a kind, gentle creature, who had long been an invalid, but who seemed to live only for her husband and children. Her daughter, a sweet, gentle girl, was far too frail to contend with the fierce storms of life. The first rude blast withered the delicate flower.

But I must go on with my story. Soon after I left home, there came a stranger to reside in the neighborhood. Hitherto, as there was little or no travel through our quiet valley, it had not been thought necessary to have a house of public entertainment. All who cáme that way were welcome to the hospitalities of our firesides. A stranger came to establish one. It would, he said, induce travellers to visit the neighborhood, when it was known that there was a good public-house on the road. He was welcomed with kindness, and took up his abode among us. It soon began to be whispered that the new tavern did not de

The Village Bar-Room.

pend so much upon the custom of strangers as that of our own citizens.

The bar was supplied with the choicest wines and liquors, and the polite host made the poor and the rich alike welcome. Soon the fruits began to appear. Red-faced bloated men were to be seen at all hours, lounging about the tavern door, or sleeping off the effects of the last night's excess by their own firesides Among their victims there was not one whose ruin seemed more certain than that of the ill-fated James Bond. Day and night he was the constant inmate of that hateful tavern. First came the loss of character and credit, and with this the loss of business. Then came poverty, and sickness, and death, to his wretched family. The daughter first passed away. The neighbors said it was more from a broken heart than anything else, for she had been her father's favorite, and his disgrace was more than she could bear. Next, the youngest son fell a victim. Thrust by his father from the house into a drenching storm, he never looked up again, and soon lay beside his sister in

Young Bond on a Carouse.

the graveyard. The wife and mother, who, strong in her love for her husband and children, had struggled long against the sad reverse, now that her youngest darling was gone, had nothing to live for, and soon she too slept beside her children.

The oldest son, naturally wild, had only been restrained from following his father's pernicious example by the tender watchfulness and earnest prayers of his mother. But her restraining influence was no longer felt, and he yielded to temptation and plunged headlong into intemperance and vice. His career was a brief one. Before he had completed his twenty-fifth year he was killed in a drunken brawl. This last blow seemed to fall with stunning effect upon the father. When he awoke to reason and reflection, deep remorse took possession of his soul. Over the bloody corpse of his murdered son, he felt those bitter pangs which are only known to him who has a child's blood upon his soul. Tears of repentance availed nothing. The last one was gone, and though

he would have poured out his heart's blood like water to have restored them to life, it was too late. Intemperance had finished its work. This ruined family were its first victims in our hitherto peaceful and happy valley. And it soon was generally admitted by the sober and reflecting, that *the shortest road to destruction, both in this world and the next, lay through the village bar-room!*

KIGGINS & KELLOGG,

Publishers, Booksellers, and Stationers,

123 & 125 William St.

Also Manufacturers of every description of

ACCOUNT BOOKS,

MEMORANDUMS and PASS BOOKS,

a large Stock of which is constantly kept on hand.
Their Assortment of

SCHOOL,

AND

MISCELLANEOUS BOOKS,

and of Foreign and Domestic

STATIONERY,

is very complete, to the inspection of which they would invite COUNTRY MERCHANTS *before purchasing elsewhere.*

JUST PUBLISHED,

REDFIELD'S TOY BOOKS,

FOUR SERIES of Twelve Books each,

BEAUTIFULLY ILLUSTRATED.

PRICE, ONE, TWO, FOUR, AND SIX CENTS.